



YEAR 4 - READING SAMPLE

Dream Horses

The moon shone down on the boy who had been washed ashore. He was still gripping the length of broken mast that he had clung onto during the storm. This length of wood had probably saved his life.

He awoke to see a herd of pale horses cropping the tough beach grass. He could hear their gentle breathing. He sat up suddenly, scanning the beach for other people. Then he started to cry as he remembered the crash of the falling mast and the sudden weight of the sail that swept him overboard. Where was everyone?

One of the horses nibbled his hair and he felt its warm breath on his cheek. It was strangely comforting. He lay down again and, listening to the wash of the tide, he drifted back off to sleep.

When Matthew next awoke, the sun was high in the sky and the horses were gone.

He got up, feeling bruised all over, and stumbled along the beach to look for them. The only sign they had been there was half-moon prints in the sand, near the sea.

Suddenly, he heard someone calling his name. He turned and saw the first mate scrambling out of the longboat from the clipper. "Are you all right, lad?" he asked, hugging Matthew fiercely. "We've been searching the island for you all night."

"Island? But the horses? I saw horses ..." stammered Matthew, remembering the reassurance he found from them in the night. Had he dreamed them? He looked along the beach and saw the hoof-prints being slowly erased by the tide.



“You’re a lucky lad if you’ve seen the wild horses of Sable Island,” said the sailor. “Some say the horses pull people from the sea and guard them till they’re safe. Others claim they’re dream horses. What do you think, lad?”

Matthew looked down to see the last evidence of the horses being washed away. He remembered the soothing warmth of their breath. Dream horses? He didn’t think so.
